

unable and unwilling to ignore human rights abuses and political suppression anywhere in the world.

By limiting the amount of funds the United States provides to the Vietnamese Government pending a substantial and documented improvement in its human rights record, the United States will show its commitment to the promotion of freedom and democracy throughout the world. This bill will prohibit the provision of additional non-humanitarian funds unless the Vietnamese Government has released political prisoners, made progress on respecting freedom of religion, made progress on returning church properties, allowed the Vietnamese people access to U.S. refugee programs, made progress on protecting ethnic minority rights, and has held accountable any official who is found to have been complicit in the trafficking of humans.

The provisions of this legislation work to ensure that the Vietnamese Government halts any and all human rights abuses, while also respecting and ensuring the rights of its citizens. I believe that this legislation provides the necessary administrative outline that will allow the United States to pursue the best possible relationship with Vietnam and cement our position as an advocate of human rights in the realm of international affairs. The bill makes it the policy of the United States to actively promote democracy and freedom through educational exchanges, as well as offering refugee resettlement to all eligible nationals of Vietnam. This bipartisan resolution is a crucial step toward securing the promotion of freedom, democracy, and a respect for universal human rights in Vietnam, the United States and the world as a focal point of United States foreign policy.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3096, the Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2007, a bill which I am pleased to co-sponsor. Introduced by my good friend and colleague, Representative CHRIS SMITH of New Jersey, a champion of human rights in this House, this is an important measure which speaks to the deteriorating state of human rights in Vietnam.

After joining the World Trade Organization in January 2007, the politburo of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) has carried out a large-scale brutal campaign of arrest against the nascent movement for democracy in Vietnam. Ignoring all international criticism and strenuous protests of the Vietnamese people, inside Vietnam and abroad, the communist regime in Hanoi has shamefully pushed ahead with its crackdown. Among others, the following events were particularly disconcerting to me:

On February 18, 2007, the second day of the Lunar New Year, which is the most sacred time in Vietnamese culture, the communist security forces raided Father Nguyen Van Ly's office within the Communal Residence of the Hue Archdiocese. Father Ly was later banished to a remote, secluded area in Hue.

On March 8, 2007, Reverend Nguyen Cong Chinch and his wife were brutally assaulted by security forces of Gia Lai Province in the Central Highlands, who then arrested Reverend Chinch on undisclosed charges.

Also on March 8, 2007, two prominent human rights activists and lawyers, Mr. Nguyen Van Dai and Ms. Le Thi Cong Nhan,

were arrested in Hanoi and were told that they would be detained for four months as part of an undisclosed investigation.

On March 9, 2007, Mr. Tran Van Hoa, a member of the People's Democracy Party in Quang Ninh Province, and Mr. Pham Van Troi, a member of the Committee for Human Rights in Ha Tay, were summoned by security forces and threatened with "immeasurable consequences" if they do not stop their advocacy for human rights in Vietnam.

Also on March 10, 2007, state security forces also raided the home of Ms. Tran Khai Thanh Thuy, a writer, on the grounds that she advocated for "people with grievances" against the government. They took away two computers, two cell phones, and hundreds of appeals that she had prepared for victims of the government's abuses.

On March 12, 2007, lawyer Le Quoc Quan, a consultant on local governance for the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNDP, and Swedish International Development Agency, was arrested in his hometown, Nghe An, less than a week after he returned from a fellowship at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, D.C. His whereabouts are unknown at this time.

On April 5, 2007, the Vietnamese authorities in Hanoi rudely prevented Congresswoman LORETTA SANCHEZ (D-CA) from meeting with several dissidents' wives at a gathering organized at the U.S. Ambassador's home. The police reportedly used very hostile and undignified manners to intervene in the meeting.

Furthermore, the Hanoi communist regime is still imprisoning many political dissidents and labor advocates such as Huynh Nguyen Dao, Truong Quoc Huy, Nguyen Tan Hoanh, Doan Huu Chuong, and more than 350 lay people of the Protestant churches in the Central Highland.

I share the concerns of the Vietnamese-Americans in my district, as well as all across the country, who are very angered and distressed by what they perceive as a new and aggressive plan of the Hanoi government to reverse the progress of human rights in Vietnam. It seems to me that the Vietnamese government is conducting this crackdown on advocates of human rights and religious freedom because it believes that the U.S. has no further leverage in the region. Now that Vietnam has been admitted to the WTO, and met with the Holy See, they believe they can respond in this brutal fashion to supporters of democracy and freedom and we will not respond.

Throughout my years in Congress, I have worked to foster human rights and religious freedom throughout the world. I have raised this issue with U.S. government officials often, especially since this recent crackdown, in an effort to pressure the Vietnamese government to stop persecuting its citizens. I believe the State Department should consider putting Vietnam back on the list of Countries of Particular Concern if the human rights situation in Vietnam does not improve. I believe that the State Department is failing the Vietnamese people struggling for human rights, and is not doing all that it can do to advocate on behalf of the Vietnamese people. The Vietnamese people should be able to choose their own leaders through free and fair elections and to use the Internet freely without censorship or restrictions.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a unanimous vote for passage of this legislation so that the Vietnamese people will know that the U.S. House

of Representatives stands in support of their freedom.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3096, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COMMENDING THE FIRST DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ACEH, A PROVINCE IN SUMATRA, INDONESIA

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 238) commending the first democratic elections in Aceh, a province in Sumatra, Indonesia, and expressing support for the further democratic development and implementation of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 238

Whereas for three decades there has been a continuous armed conflict in Aceh, a province in Sumatra, Indonesia;

Whereas violence between the Indonesian military and the Free Aceh Movement has resulted in an estimated 15,000 deaths in the region;

Whereas the tsunami on December 26, 2004, killed at least 165,000 people in Aceh, devastated the landscape, and led to the loss of livelihood for 600,000 people;

Whereas the Government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement signed a Memorandum of Understanding on August 15, 2005, in Helsinki;

Whereas the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM), led by the European Union (EU), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Norway, and Switzerland, has supported the implementation of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding successfully;

Whereas the Free Aceh Movement has demobilized its military troops and decommissioned its arms;

Whereas the Government of Indonesia has withdrawn its nonorganic military and police forces from Aceh;

Whereas the Law on the Governing of Aceh (LoGA) was signed into law by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on August 1, 2006;

Whereas the general life situation of the Acehnese has improved significantly since the signing of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding and the Acehnese populate markets and celebrate festivities in public;

Whereas the first democratic and peaceful gubernatorial and district administrative